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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

MICHIGAN Department of
Education

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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

July 1, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Local and Intermediate District Superintendents
             Public School Academy Directors and Authorizers
             Consolidated Application Main Contacts

FROM: Sally Vaughn, Ph.D.
             Deputy Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer

SUBJECT: Frequently Asked Questions on the Annual Education Report (AER)

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is releasing frequently asked
questions (FAQs) about the Annual Education Report (AER) that is to be used this
summer by local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools to meet federal and state
reporting requirements.

The Annual Education Report (AER) is a report designed to meet the federal
requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as NCLB)
for an annual report. The report provides detailed data on state administered
student assessment results, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results, teacher
qualification information, and the state results for the National Assessment of
Educational Progress (NAEP). There is an AER for the state, each district and each
school, populated with the appropriate information.

The AER reports and cover letters also meet the state requirement (PA 25) for
reporting to parents and communities in an annual education report.

Some of the FAQs included include:
• Are LEAs and their schools REQUIRED to use the state produced Annual
  Education Report?
• What are the components of the AER that LEAs and schools must use?
• What does the LEA and each school need to do this summer (2010) to meet the
  reporting requirements?

- When must the AERs and cover letters be posted and available?
- How will the state and federal government monitor implementation of these reporting requirements?
- Is the data in the AER report current? When will the REAL data be available?
- What can I do now to prepare for the release of the 2009-10 AER?
- How will the 2009-10 AYP public release and the public-facing AER tool release be coordinated?

We hope this FAQ will help you effectively use the AER. If you have additional questions, please email David Judd at juddd@michigan.gov.

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Frequently Asked Questions
Regarding the Annual Education Report
July 1, 2010

1. Are local education agencies (LEAs) and their schools REQUIRED to use the state produced Annual Education Report (AER)?

   ANSWER: Yes. All LEAs, including public districts, public school academies, and intermediate school districts (ISDs) or regional education service agencies (RESAs) that operate schools, and their schools are required to use the state produced AER reports this summer to report their 2009-2010 performance. This is how Michigan schools and LEAs will meet the requirement of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 (ESEA or NCLB).

   Using the AER reduces the burden on nearly 850 LEAs and 6,000 schools to collect and format this complicated set of data for presentation to parents and community stakeholders to meet federal requirements. There remain only a few much simpler tasks for educators to perform. See #3 below.

   The federal government audited the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in 2006 and again in 2010 and issued a finding that the state, LEAs, and schools were not reporting all of the required federal elements of an annual education report. The state has monitored nearly 200 LEAs and their schools in the past three years and found a very small number of LEAs and schools meeting these reporting requirements. The federal government has reviewed the proposed state produced AER recently, and approved it as presenting all of the required elements. However, all LEAs and schools must present the AER reports and cover letters to parents and the community to be in compliance with ESEA.

2. What are the components of the AER that LEAs and schools must use?

   ANSWER: Here are the components of the AER that are required:

   LEA Components: There are two components that LEAs must use, A) the "Combined district AER report" and B) a cover letter using the content outlined in the district template cover letter. Both the report and the cover letter templates present information unique to the LEA and can be found on the D4SS website.

   The combined AER is different for each LEA or school and includes:
   - Assessment data: MEAP or MME and MI-Access assessment results
   - Teacher Qualification data
   - NAEP assessment data (state results)
   - AYP results

   The AER reports on all required subgroups are consistent with federal requirements with appropriate cell suppression for small "n" size subgroups.

School Components: the same two components must be used for each school, the "Combined" school AER report and a cover letter using the content outlined in the school template cover letter. These can also be found on the D4SS website. The data is school specific and the cover letter must be tailored to the unique characteristics of the school as outlined in the template. The AER report is approximately 44 pages long for the average school.

3. What do the LEA and each school need to do to meet the reporting requirements?

   ANSWER: Do NOT do this until August 1, 2010, when the 2009-2010 data is available. But these are the steps you need to complete:
   A) The LEA must export the district AER and post it to the district website.
   B) Edit the district template cover letter addressing all of the requirements and post this with the district AER.
   C) The LEA must make paper copies of the AER report and cover letter available to parents and members of the community who do not have internet access.
   D) The district must announce to the parents and community that both the district and the school AERs are available and how to access them with the cover letters.

   Each school must also:
   A) Post the school AER report and school cover letter on the school website, if the school has a website. If the school does not have its own website, these must be posted to the district website.
   B) The school must make paper copies of both documents available to parents and the school community members who do not have computer access.

4. When must the AERs and cover letters be posted and available?

   ANSWER: LEAs and schools must post and make copies available 15 days before school starts in the fall of 2010. This is a new federal guideline established in 2009. Providing this information 15 days before school starts allows parents to make a better choice about which school to select for their child. This information should remain available on the website(s) for a year, until the next year's report is prepared.

5. How will the state monitor implementation of these reporting requirements?

   ANSWER: Both the state and the federal government will be monitoring by checking the district and the school websites for the AER reports and cover letters. The state will also ask to review the paper copies during on-site monitoring and during other monitoring activities of any ESEA programs.

6. How do we preview the AER and find the template cover letters?

ANSWER: Go to www.data4ss.org. Log in to the dynamic inquiry (DI) tool and click on the Annual Education Report tab on the left.

7. If my staff does not have a log-in name and password to the D4SS website, how do I get them one?

   ANSWER: Contact your ISD/RESA (for a list of contacts, visit www.data4ss.org and click on the "contact us" tab).

8. What will we find on the D4SS website?

   ANSWER: The content of the report is presented in several sections:

   A. Teacher Quality: This report identifies teacher qualifications in relation to requirements. Here you can find how many teachers in a school, district or across the state possess specific qualifications.

   B. Student Assessment: This report presents assessment information for English language arts and mathematics for grades 3 to 8 and 11 compared to targets for all students as well as subgroups of students. The report helps users to understand achievement progress within grades and schools, and to make comparisons to district, state and national achievement benchmarks.

   C. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): The AYP report uses information from assessments, graduation and attendance rates to determine if the school and district are making AYP. Here you can identify how well your school and district are serving the overall academic needs of students.

   D. Combined Report: This report provides all of the information on Teacher Quality, Student Assessment and AYP for schools, districts, and the state in one convenient place. This is the report that districts and schools need to export and post to their websites with edited cover letters, and print for parents and community members who do not have internet access.

9. Is the data in the AER report current? When will the REAL data be available?

   ANSWER: The data in the AER report is currently year-old data (2008-2009). It is only presented to familiarize school staff with the report form and give you practice navigating the website and report. Do not export or print this version of the report!

   The new data (2009-2010) needed for the reporting during the summer of 2010 will be available to LEAs and schools on or before August 1, 2010, as soon as the high school MME and AYP data is finalized. The old data will be removed from the website.

10.Where does this data come from? Will we get a chance to appeal the data presented?

ANSWER: The data in the AER report has been extracted directly from a variety of state data bases. For example, the assessment data comes directly from reports prepared by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) MEAP, MME, MI-Access and NAEP reports. Teacher Quality data comes from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) as reported in the Registry for Educational Personnel (REP). Some AYP data comes from OEAA and some AYP data comes from CEPI.

LEAs and schools will have had the opportunity to appeal this data during the appeal or correction windows of the source reports. For example, a district that wanted to appeal assessment results or participation rates had the opportunity to do so during the assessment appeal windows. Districts that wanted to correct the teacher quality data had the opportunity to do so shortly after submitting the REP data.

To appeal or correct next year's data, take full advantage of the assessment and AYP appeal or CEPI data correction opportunities. There are no appeals of data once it is part of the AER.

11.What can I do now to prepare for the release of the 2009-10 AER?

ANSWER:
A) Go to the www.data4ss.org website. Log in to the website and open the AER for your LEA or school. Familiarize yourself with the data from last year. Learn how to navigate the reports. Identify how to print the "Combined" report and how to export it to your website. But, DO NOT export or print this old data!

B) Elementary and middle schools have received the 2009-2010 MEAP and MI-Access assessment data and their AYP status data. Familiarize yourself with this information. Begin drafting your AER cover letters.
C) High schools have received their preliminary assessment and AYP data. If it is not being appealed, you can also start drafting the district and high school AER cover letters. If it is being appealed, you will soon know the outcome of the appeal and can start drafting the LEA and high school cover letters.
D) As soon as the 2009-2010 data is forwarded to AER, it will be released   to LEAs and districts, and the public (no later than August 1, 2010). At this time you should do final edits on your cover letters, export and print the AER and cover letters for the LEA and schools, post the AER and cover letters on appropriate websites and make paper copies available to your parents and community.
E) Post your AER reports and cover letters as soon as the state publicly releases AYP results, but no later than 15 days before school starts. See # 13 below.

12. Does a public school academy (PSA) or LEA that has ONLY ONE SCHOOL need to produce and distribute both district and school AERs and cover letters?

ANSWER: No. If there is only one school in your LEA or PSA, you only need to produce and distribute a school level AER report and cover letter. Do NOT produce, post or distribute district level reports or cover letters.

13. How will the 2009-10 AYP public release and the public-facing AER tool release be coordinated?

ANSWER: The 2009-10 AYP release of elementary/middle school and high school results will be publicly released by August 13th, 2010. The AER tool, with 2009-10 data, will be made publicly available at the same time. The AER tool, with 2009-10 data, will ONLY be available via the D4SS tool to schools and districts by August 1, 2010. The 2009-10 AYP results available via the AER, are embargoed by MDE until the mid-August public AYP release.

RELEASE OF SCHOOL AND DISTRICT AYP DATA FROM THE ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT IN ADVANCE OF THE PUBLIC RELEASE DATE IN MID-AUGUST BY THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION MAY JEOPARDIZE THIS ADVANCE AER POSTING IN THE FUTURE.

14. Can I just link to the D4SS site to provide the AER for my LEA and each of my schools?

ANSWER: Although the ability to bookmark a district or school report is available within the AER tool, we encourage you to not link to the D4SS site to make your AERs available. Doing so will increase user traffic on the servers that host the AER and DI tool which may result in parents and community members not being able to access the site due to a possible overload. Also please keep in mind that a bookmark to a school or district report only provides the data report, not the narrative cover letter that is to also be included with the data portion of the completed AER.

Instead, please export your LEA and school AER reports and post them on your LEA or school websites with the appropriate cover letters. Here is how to do this:
   A. Access the Dynamic Inquiry (DI) tool via this website: www.data4ss.org and click on 'Inquiry Tool'.
   B. Log in to the DI tool with your username and password. If you do not have access to the DI tool, please contact your ISD D4SS system administrator. If you do not know who this individual is please send an email to contact@data4ss.org for additional assistance.
   C. After logging in to the DI tool, click on the AER button located on the bottom of the left hand navigation bar. This will open up a new browser window that will prompt you to re-enter your DI tool username and password.
   D. You may now generate an AER report. First click on the 'Combined Report' button located on the AER left hand navigation bar.

E. Enter the ISD name and LEA/District name from the provided drop down boxes to produce an LEA AER, or enter the ISD name, LEA/District name, and school name to produce a school AER. After making your selections, click on the 'View Results' button on the bottom of inquiry settings page. This will generate an AER report.

F. The report is available for review online by clicking on each of the tabs for Student Assessment Data, AYP Data, Teacher Quality Data, and NAEP data.

G. To export a report, scroll to the bottom of any of the above mentioned tabs and click on the 'Export All Reports' button. This will open a dialogue box prompting you to 'Open' or 'Save' your report. Click on 'Save' and specify where on your computer you would like to save the PDF file.

H. You have now successfully saved your data portion of the LEA or school AER. You must still download and complete the appropriate cover letter template available under the 'Cover Letters' button located on the left hand navigation bar. Once the cover letter is edited and approved, the cover letter(s) must be posted with the AER reports on the appropriate LEA or school web sites.